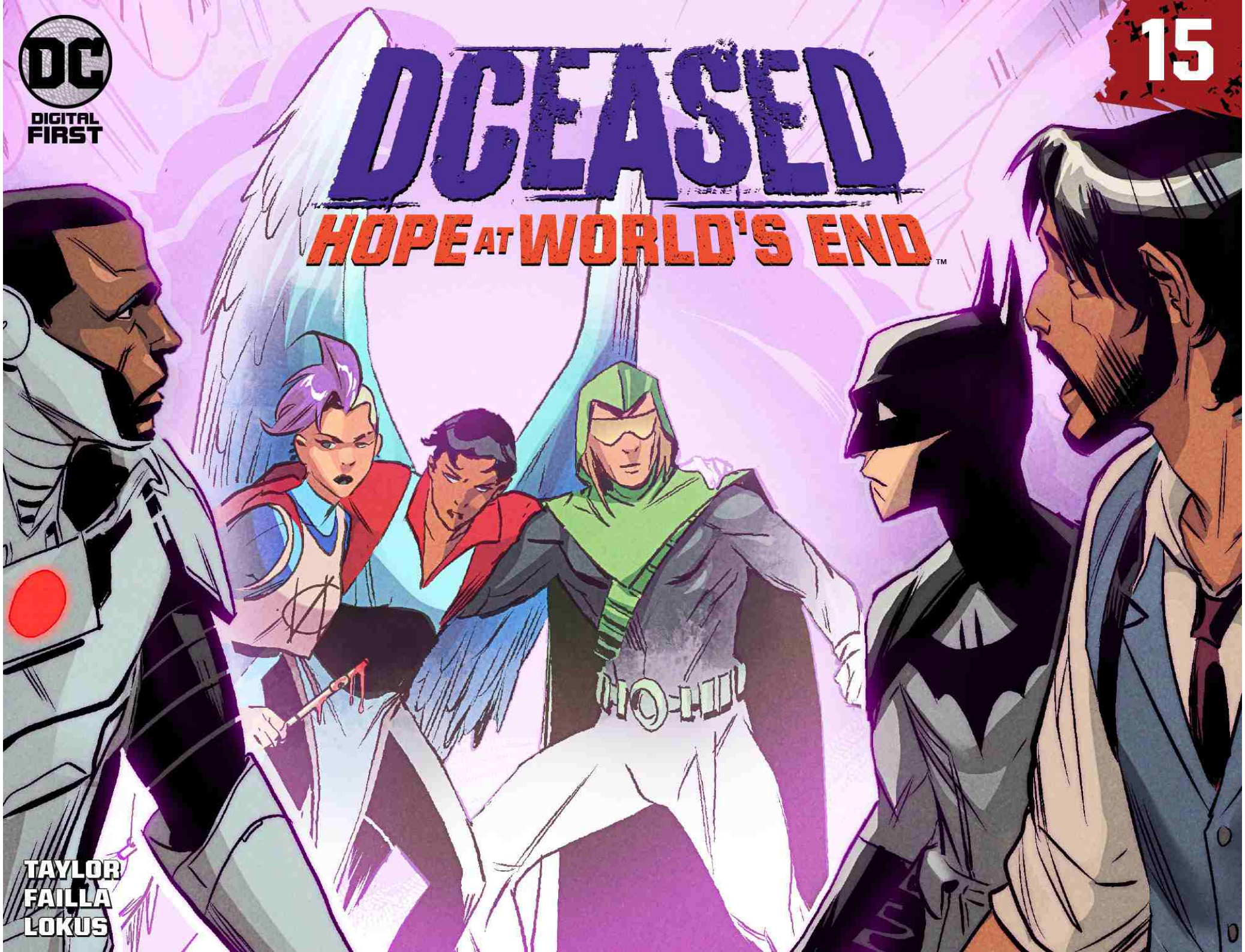
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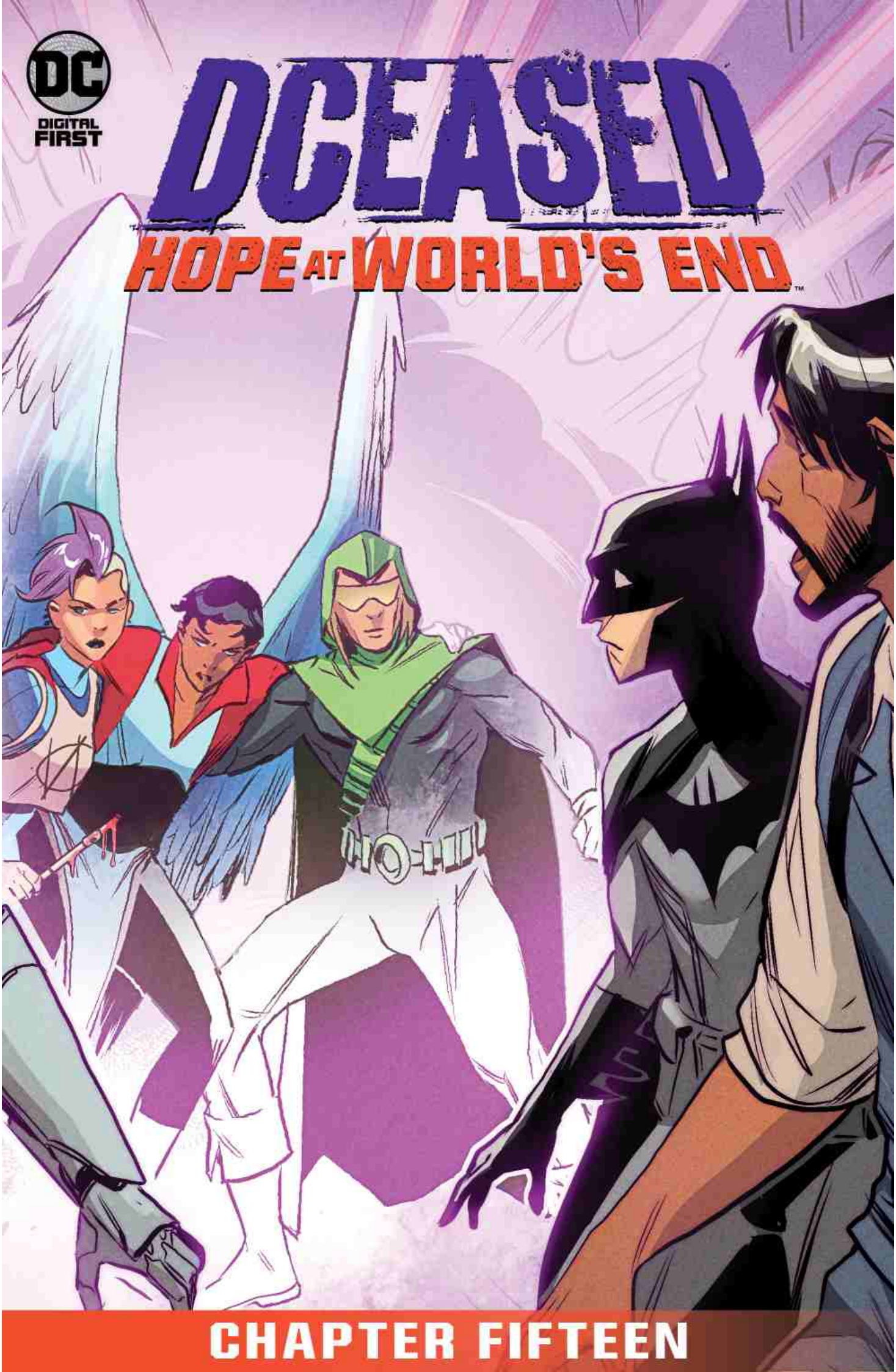
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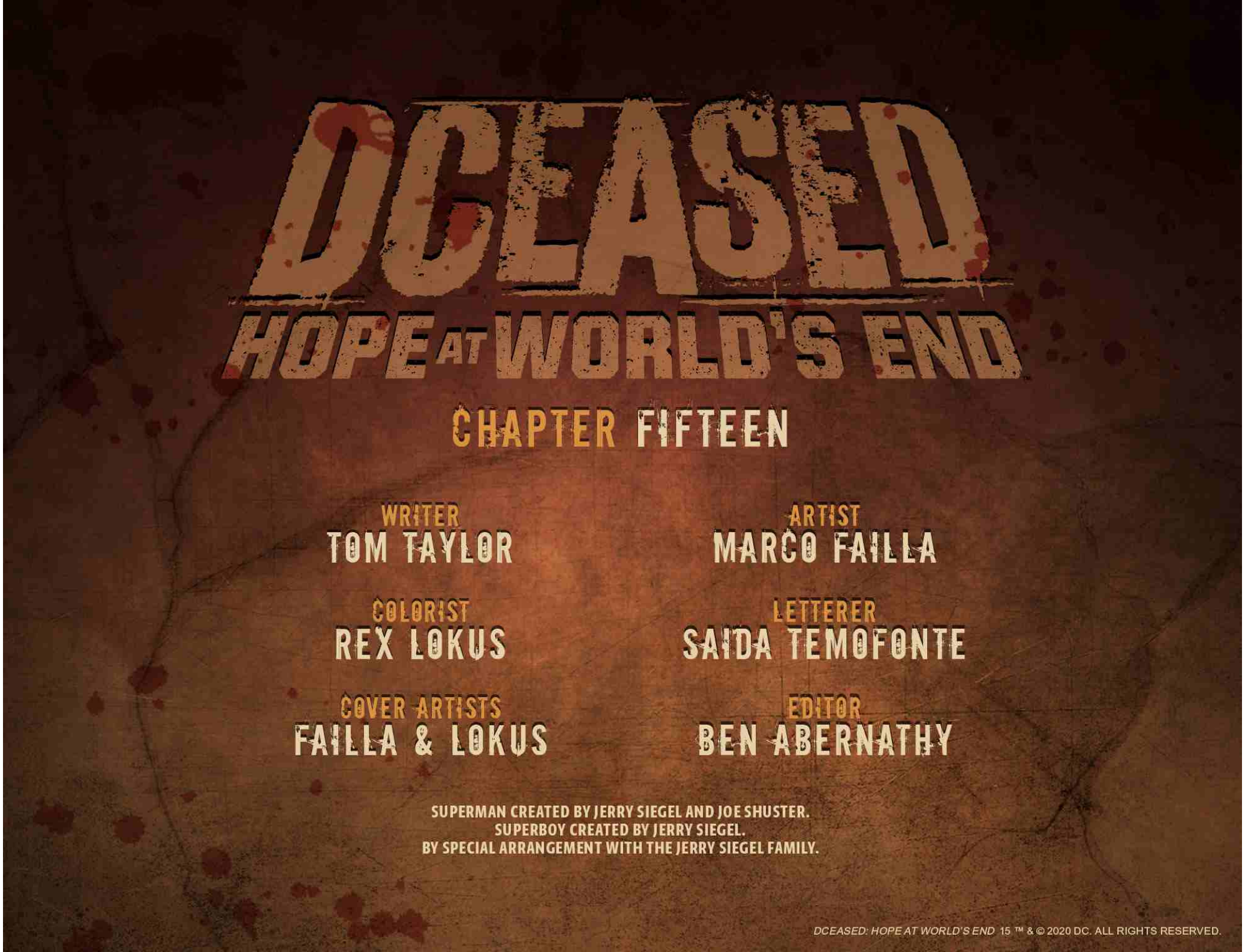
CHAPTER FIFTEEN



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LEX LUTHOR HAD SENT TWO HEROES TO DIE TO SAVE HUMANITY.
WE HAVE TO KEEP MOVING, HARTLEY!
AND... YOU CAN'T RESPOND. OF COURSE.
YOU HAVE TO KEEP PLAYING OR EVERYONE DIES.
WINK

I HAD A MUSIC TEACHER AT SCHOOL WHO HAD A SIMILAR MENTALITY.
REALLY SUCKED ALL THE ENJOYMENT OUT OF THE CELLO, YOU KNOW?

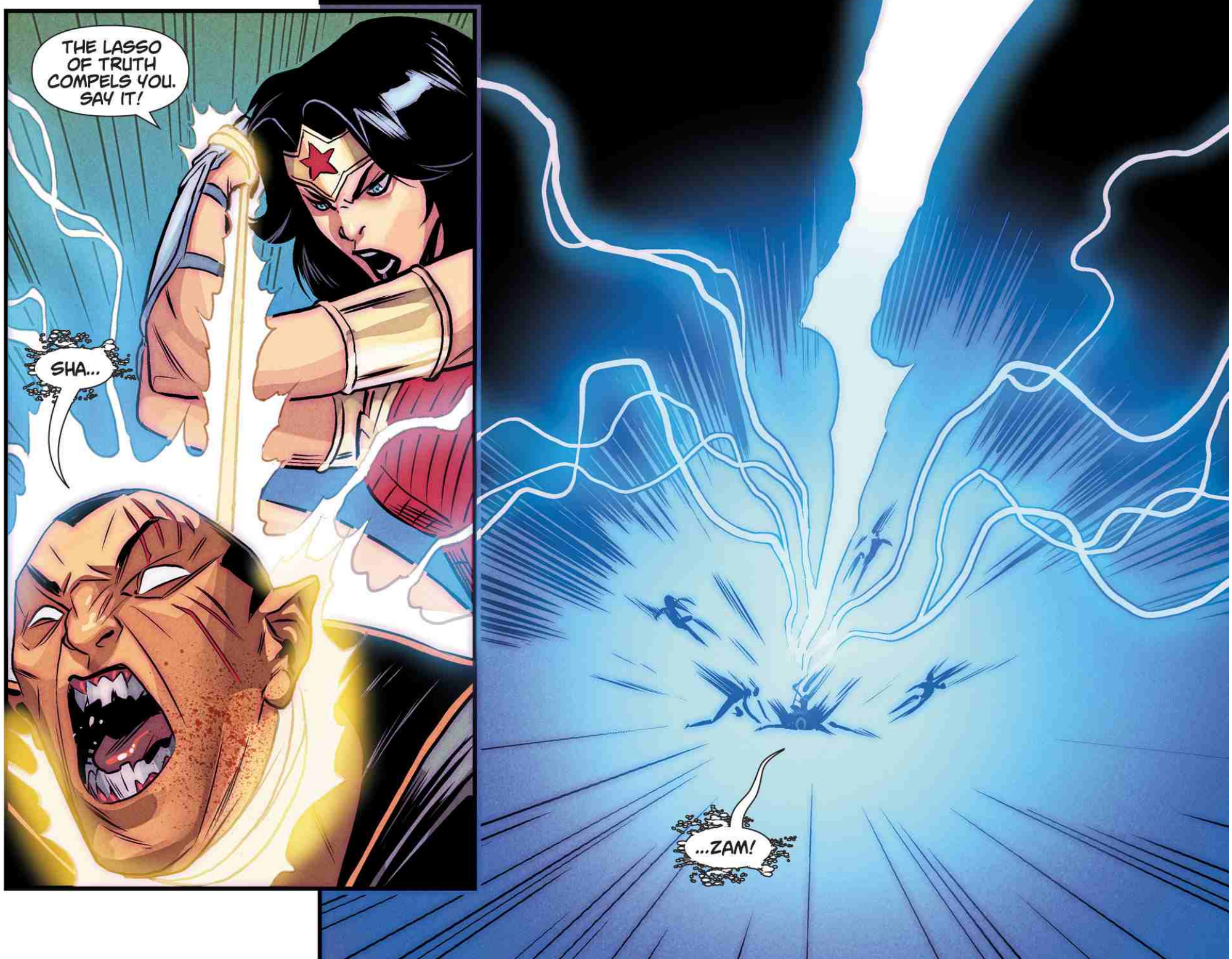
WINK.
THE LAST OF THE ANTI-LIVING HAVE ENTERED THE LAND OF NIGHTSHADES.
IT'S TIME.
OKAY... BUT WE HAVE AN ISSUE.

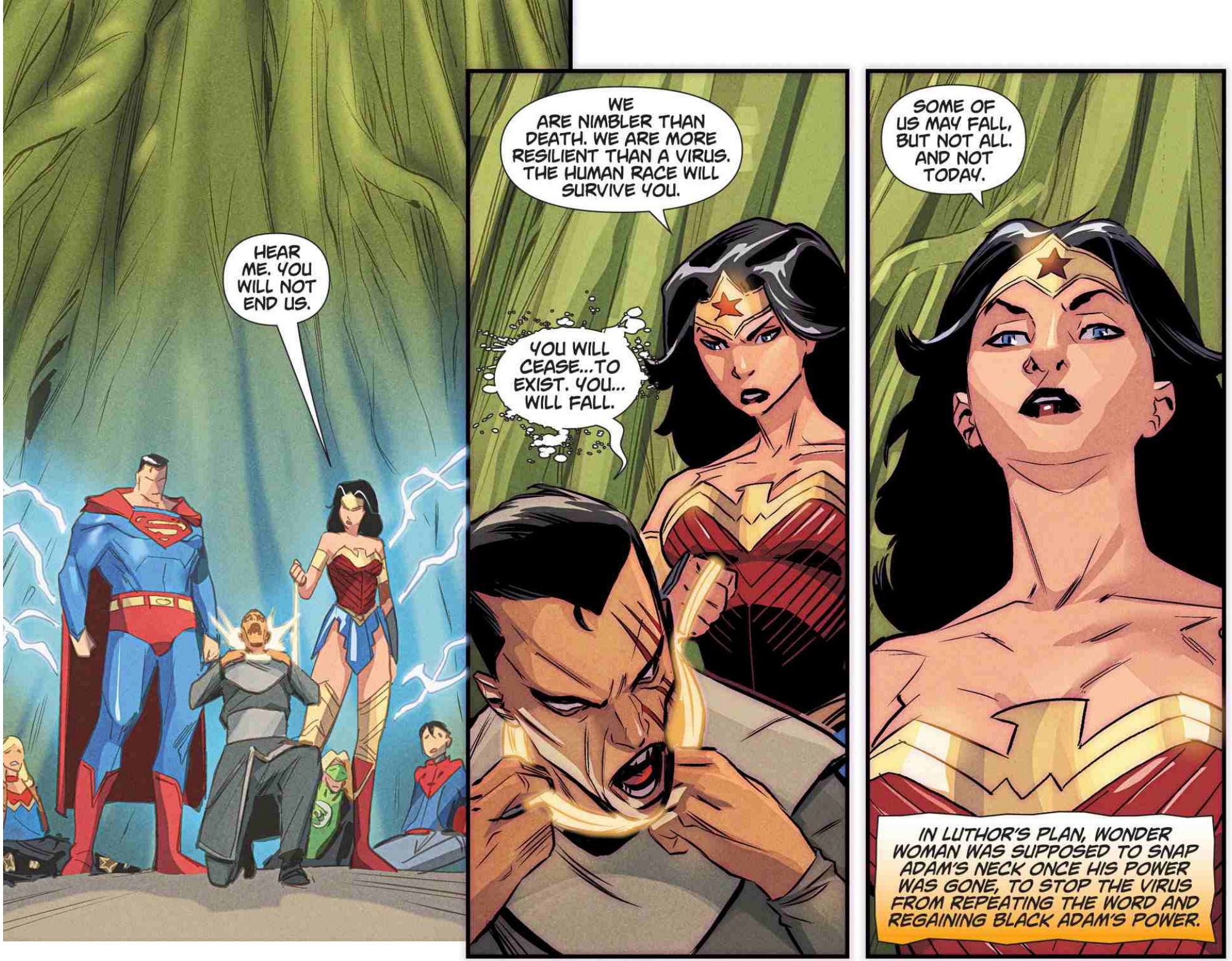
THE PROBLEM WITH A MILLION UNDEAD SWARMING TOWARD YOU IS IT'S NOT SO EASY TO FIND AND KILL A SINGLE ONE.
WINK!

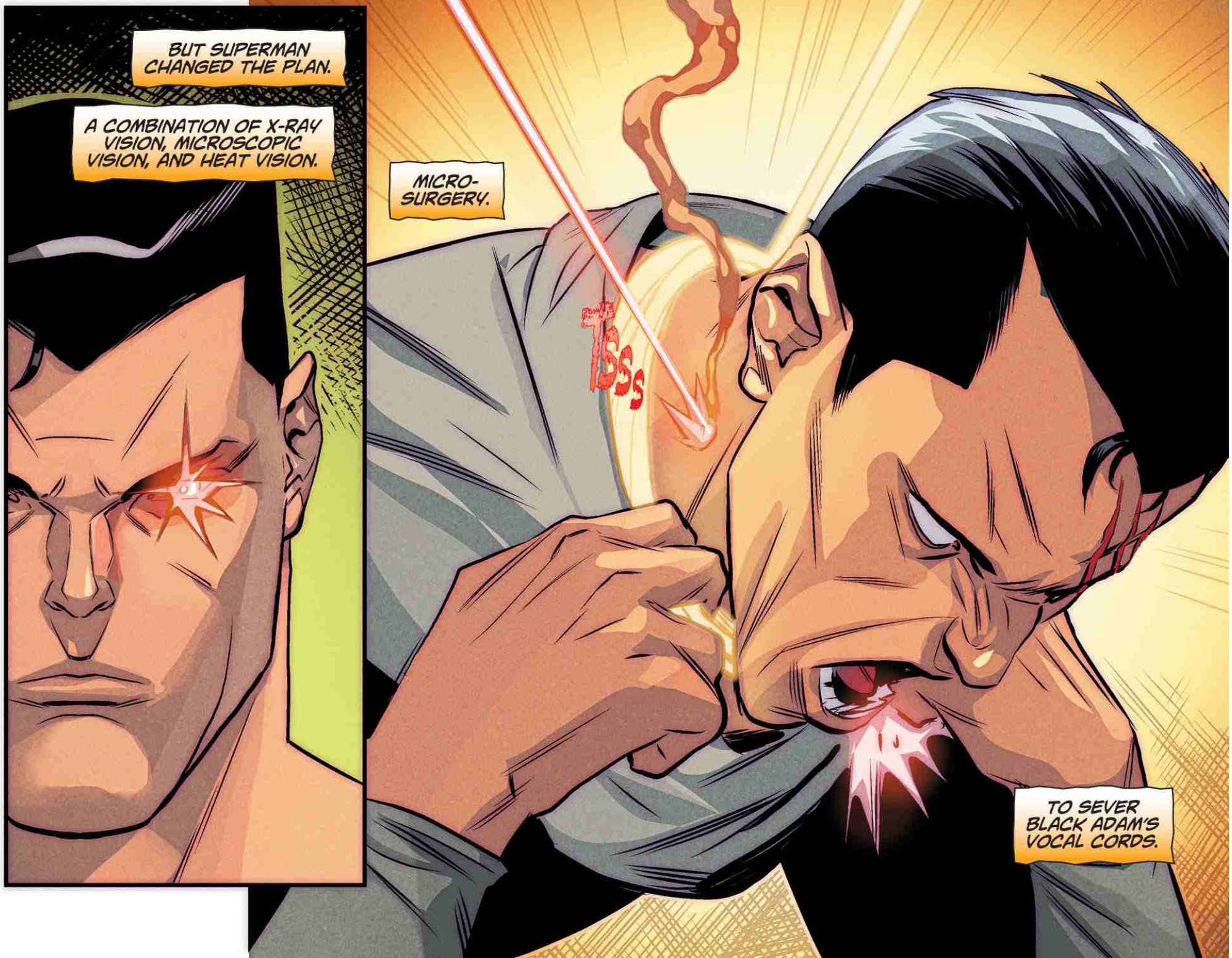
AERIE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE?
THIS IS A ONE-WAY TRIP. AS SOON AS WE KILL NIGHTSHADE, THE DOORWAY TO THIS LAND CLOSES.
YEAH. I ASSUMED IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
YOU LEFT ME.
TO FIGHT FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD.
I'M NOT INVESTED IN THE FUTURE WITHOUT YOU IN IT.
WE'RE NOT COMING BACK.
AND I'M NOT COMING BACK WITH YOU.

ARE WE ARGUING OR ARE WE SAVING THE WORLD?
FINE.
WHAT'S THE PLAN?
THE PLAN *WAS* TO SHOOT NIGHTSHADE, BUT WE HAVE NO IDEA WHERE SHE IS.
THEN I GUESS YOU'RE LUCKY I DIDN'T LET YOU ABANDON ME.

THE OTHER PART OF LUTHOR'S PLAN WAS SIMPLE.
I KNOW YOU CAN SPEAK.
SAY "SHAZAM."
HRRR.

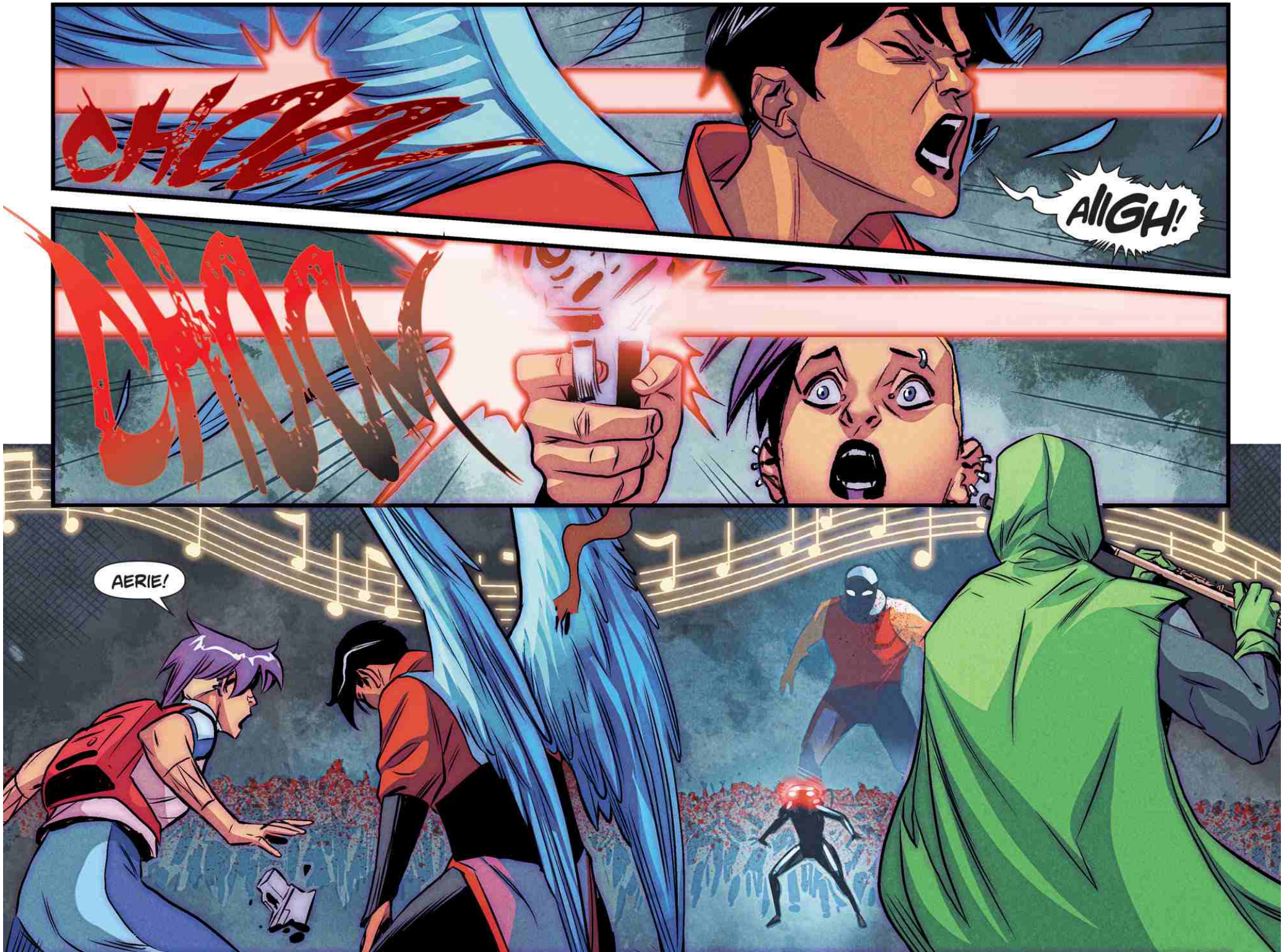

THE LASSO OF TRUTH COMPELS YOU. SAY IT!
SHA...
...ZAM!


HEAR ME. YOU WILL NOT END US.
WE ARE NIMBLER THAN DEATH. WE ARE MORE RESILIENT THAN A VIRUS. THE HUMAN RACE WILL SURVIVE YOU.
YOU WILL CEASE...TO EXIST. YOU... WILL FALL.
SOME OF US MAY FALL, BUT NOT ALL. AND NOT TODAY.
IN LUTHOR'S PLAN, WONDER WOMAN WAS SUPPOSED TO SNAP ADAM'S NECK ONCE HIS POWER WAS GONE, TO STOP THE VIRUS FROM REPEATING THE WORD AND REGAINING BLACK ADAM'S POWER.


BUT SUPERMAN CHANGED THE PLAN.
A COMBINATION OF X-RAY VISION, MICROSCOPIC VISION, AND HEAT VISION.
MICRO-SURGERY.
TSSs
TO SEVER BLACK ADAM'S VOCAL CORDS.

WHERE ARE YOU?
THERE.

WINK!
DO IT!
GOODBYE, ANY CHANCE OF GETTING OUT OF HERE.
CHOOM


CHZZ
AIIGH!
PHOOM
AERIE!

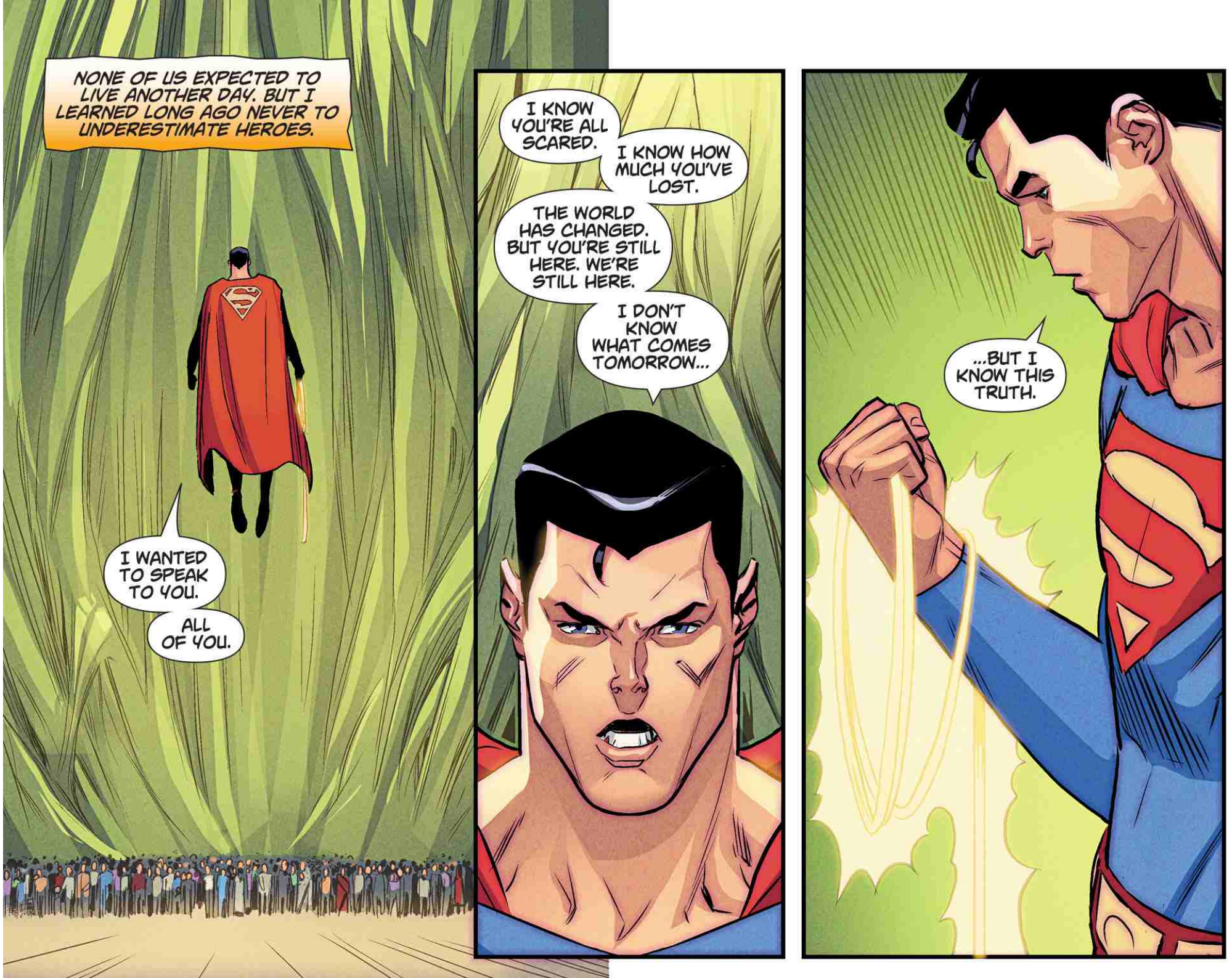
HNNG... GET US AHEAD OF THEM!
NO. WE STAY HERE.
PIPER!

YOUR FLUTE! YOU CAN'T STOP!
YES, I CAN.
I'M DONE PLAYING.
SHANK

WINK AND PIPER DID IT. THE DOORWAY IS CLOSED.
THE ANTI-LIFE ARMY IS FOREVER TRAPPED IN THE LAND OF NIGHTSHADES.
WE'D LOST SO MANY SINCE THE VIRUS HIT.
SO MANY PEOPLE HAD GIVEN THEIR LIVES...
WHERE'S HARTLEY? WHAT DID YOU DO?
I DID NOTHING. HE CHOSE THIS. YOU SHOULD BE PROUD OF HIM. HE CHOSE TO--

...WE DESERVED A WIN.
WINK
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU SAID "I'M DONE PLAYING."
IT JUST CAME TO ME.
LIAR.
OKAY. I'VE PRACTICED IT FOR YEARS.

OH, HEY. I GRABBED YOUR FLUTE. IT'S FULL OF BRAIN BITS AND EYEBALL, BUT DO YOU WANT IT BACK OR...?
I'LL MAKE ANOTHER ONE.
GOOD CALL.
YOU CAME BACK.
YEAH. NOBLE SACRIFICES ARE SEVERELY OVERRATED IF THERE'S ANOTHER OPTION.


NONE OF US EXPECTED TO LIVE ANOTHER DAY. BUT I LEARNED LONG AGO NEVER TO UNDERESTIMATE HEROES.
I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU.
ALL OF YOU.
I KNOW YOU'RE ALL SCARED.
I KNOW HOW MUCH YOU'VE LOST.
THE WORLD HAS CHANGED. BUT YOU'RE STILL HERE. WE'RE STILL HERE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT COMES TOMORROW...
...BUT I KNOW THIS TRUTH.

IF WE ARE TOGETHER, WE CAN OVERCOME ANYTHING.
I BELIEVE IN ALL OF YOU. I BELIEVE IN US. WE WILL OVERCOME THIS VIRUS.
UNTIL THEN, WE WILL CARE FOR EACH OTHER AND KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE.
THIS IS NOT THE END OF THE WORLD. WHILE WE STILL BREATHE, WHILE WE STILL FIGHT, WHILE WE STILL RESIST, THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE.
THE END.

DC FUTURE STATE
DISCOVER THE DESTINY OF THE DC UNIVERSE!
COMING IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

ZONE